HOLBROOK LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

WAR SUFFERERS'
RELIEF BULLETIN

"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister"

June, 1945 — Vol. 1, No. 4

The Mennonite Central Committee in Paraguay

By Willard H. Smith

Bro. Smith is director of M.C.C. interests in Paraguay and in charge of the Mennonite Center at 364 Eligio Ayala, Asuncion. This carefully prepared report explains in brief compass the interest and activity of North American Mennonites in Paraguay.—Editor.

The interests of the Mennonite Central Committee in Paraguay may be divided into three main divisions. The earliest interest was concerned mainly with the colonization of the Russian Mennonite refugees in the Paraguayan Chaco between 1930 and 1932. This involved financial help in the form of loans and some technical direction during the early settlement period. These relationships still exist, and in 1943, A. E. Janzen of Tabor College was sent by the M.C.C. to adjust these debts equitably in favor of the colonists, thus encouraging their payment and liquidation and putting the colony economy on a sounder basis. It is the present hope that by 1948 these debts will have been cleared by past adjustments and current payments.

The second phase of M.C.C. interest in Paraguay Mennonites is related to the religious, social, educational, and health problems in the various colonies. Efforts have been made from the beginning of the colonization, by the M.C.C. and its commissioners to Paraguay, to assist and encourage growth in these fields. In 1941 it was recognized that these isolated Mennonite communities were urgently in need of a medical doctor. Dr. John Schmidt was sent to work for a year on health problems of the Mennonites in Paraguay. He was joined during this period by his brother, Dr. Herbert Schmidt, who performed a number of major operations in the Fernheim Hospital, during a very brief but successful mission. In the same year Vernon Schmidt came to Paraguay to supervise, in the Hutterite colony, the construction of a hospital which was intended to serve, through the three medical doctors of that colony, the Hutterites and the near-by colony of Mennonites (Friesland colony), and the neighboring Paraguayans. Dr. John Schmidt returned to the United States at the end of 1942, but in the middle of 1943 he came again to Paraguay with a nurse (Mrs. John Schmidt) and Dr. and Mrs. George Klassen to continue service in the health program of the Mennonites in Paraguay. Dr. Schmidt headed the Fernheim Hospital staff; Mrs. John Schmidt began the nurses' training courses and supervised the nursing staff; Dr. Klassen opened a dental clinic and began training three young men from the colonies to continue the dental clinics and services after he returned to the United States in September, 1944. In January, 1945, Dr. A. M. Lohrentz arrived for a year's service in the colonies as an eye, ear, nose, and throat specialist with headquarters in the Fernheim Hospital.

Vernon Schmidt continued his service in Paraguay, after the completion of the Hutterite Hospital, with the planning and beginning of a road-building and improvement program between the Chaco colonies and the end of the Carlos Casados Brothers railroad. This work is nearing completion now with the assistance of Orval Myers. The latter, having arrived in 1944 as a technician-engineer, is at present plan-

ning to build a telephone communication system for the villages and communities in the Chaco. Sara Histand arrived in 1944, having been married, en route, to Vernon Schmidt, who went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, for the wedding. Mrs. Schmidt has been contributing to the health program of the colonies in her capacity and experience as a nurse.

Recently there arrived, to begin work in the educational field, Bro. and Sister Waldo Hiebert, who hope to organize and lead the new school program in the Chaco. This attempt of the M.C.C. to provide trained teachers for the educational program of the colonies is a result of a long-standing need which the colonists have been unable to meet through their own efforts and training of teachers. It is hoped that this part of the M.C.C. program will meet the needs of at least those who have not had the opportunity to attend school beyond the village grade school.

In 1943, Robert W. Geigley arrived in Paraguay in the company of Bro. Janzen, and it was decided by the M.C.C. and representatives here that efforts should be made to do something about the Asuncion Mennonite problems. To this end the M.C.C. began a Mennonite home in Asuncion. This program was left in charge of Robert Geigley and a small start was made toward the objectives of the project. Later, with the arrival of Mrs. Willard Smith to act as matron of the home and Willard H. Smith as director of M.C.C. in Paraguay, this home was developed and expanded under their supervision to include, in addition to the hostel, social and religious services to the Asuncion and visiting Mennonites, also the administrative offices and headquarters of the M.C.C. in Paraguay. Also, in 1944, Elvin R. Souder was added to the Asuncion staff as secretary to the director and treasurer and bookkeeper for M.C.C. relief in Paraguay. In February, 1945, Mrs. Elvin Souder and their daughter Janie arrived; Mrs. Souder is assisting in the program of the hostel and the Asuncion Mennonite home.

In the third category of the M.C.C. projects in Paraguay is the present planned program for setting up a project among the Paraguayan people. This will take the form of trying to develop a school feeding program of supplementary foods for the children of a Paraguayan community near

(Continued on next page)

Notes from the Field

The Problem of Mines in France.—Mines, as you will note from the incident mentioned by Henry Buller, are going to be a problem in France for many years. Everywhere we went people spoke of dangerous mines. The son of Bro. Joseph Widmer suggests we send a team of mine diggers out. This is a job for experts. All are underground and cannot be seen. Some mines must be pressed or stepped on four times before they discharge. Until fields and places used as military quarters are demined, accidents will continue to happen. All our workers for France or Holland need to learn as much as possible about mines before going there. Many folks there have been killed because they did not know anything about mines or how they work. Along a roadside I saw a beautiful belt full of shells. We had stopped to check the oil in the car. I was just about to pick it up when the thought came to me that the place might be mined. At any rate, I said to myself, Why should I want this belt if soldiers who passed here by the hundreds every day did not care for it? Our relief workers need to know that there are beautiful places in Europe which will not be safe to visit until many years after the war.—Samuel Goering.

Managing Shops in Egypt.—In the past two weeks work in the shops has slowed down. This is especially true of one camp where everyone is preparing to go home. Of course, there is always delay so that they do not always happen to go. We are supposed to have 1,000 pairs of new leather shoes made—the needed larger sizes that could not be purchased—but I am having a difficult time getting the cobblers to do it. The sewing shops made the following garments in April: 4,263 ladies' slips, 922 pairs of men's trousers, 1,000 skirts, 100 blouses, and hundreds of miscellaneous articles.—Ervin Hooley.

Relief Work Not Glamorous.—Relief work is not glamorous but consists of day-by-day Christian living—doing our daily tasks well in washing floors and dishes, spreading butter and jam, pushing a baby buggy, walking with a group of children, and many, many routine duties. But these things can be done "in the name of Christ."—Ellen Harder.

The WAR SUFFERERS' RELIEF BULLETIN is published monthly by the Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa. Any Material printed herein may be republished. Printed in U.S.A.

Thinking about Relief

Ministering to Our Brethren

During these days when we are preparing for a ministry of relief to sufferers in Europe and other war-stricken areas, it might be well to remind ourselves of the continuing program in behalf of our brethren in Paraguay. The Scriptures enjoin us to love and minister to all men but "especially unto them who are of the household of faith." It is with this concern in mind that we selected for the leading article in this issue of the Bulletin a summary of the present work of the Mennonite Central Committee in Paraguay.

Our relief program in Europe will also be directed to bring assistance to Mennonites, along with the outreach to other war sufferers. In Alsace, at the present time, overtures have been made to minister to Mennonites who have suffered as a result of the war. We know that many Mennonites in Holland are experiencing the privations of an overrun war area. We will want to minister to them. Besides fulfilling our obligation to help the Dutch Mennonites, we will have the opportunity to pay back in part the service their forefathers rendered to our ancestors in the eighteenth century. We have scant knowledge about the thousands of Mennonites in Russia, Germany, and Poland and what their plight must be. As the Lord leads we may be able to bring some succor to them also. Truly, the months and years ahead will place upon the Mennonites of North America a great obligation to minister to Mennonites in other parts of the world. Was there ever a time when so large a number of Mennonites were in need of relief ministration!

Nonresistance and Relief Service

The times continue to test our belief in love and nonresistance as the Christian way of life. Wartime brings severe tests and compels us to declare ourselves. But, perhaps, the greater test comes in peacetime when out of our own conviction and initiative we will have to amplify our beliefs by positive expression. The aspects of this test of our peace beliefs are becoming apparent as the war comes to a close and we move into the postwar world.

While we have had opportunity to go the second mile in Civilian Public Service and to give positive expression to our peace beliefs, no doubt the opportunities of service to war sufferers will provide another sphere in which to witness creatively. One decided difference between positive service in C.P.S. and positive service in relief is that we were compelled to do the first—the latter will depend upon our own interest and conviction. It is in this area that a test of our peace beliefs will come. Those of us who believe in a way of life diametrically opposed to war and violence will now have the opportunity to prove the depth of our convictions and the feasibility of the way of love.

The Scriptures Urge Charity and Love

Inasmuch as they [all true believers] are thus one, therefore it is Christian and reasonable that they truly love one another and that the one member be solicitous for the welfare of the other, for both the Scriptures and nature teach it. All Scripture urges charity and love, and it is the one sign by which a true Christian may be known, as the Lord says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples [that is, that ye are Christians], if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

Beloved reader, it has not been heard of that an intelligent person clothes and cares for one part of his body and leaves the rest destitute and naked. Oh, no, it is but natural to care for all the members. Thus it must be with those who are the Lord's church or body.—Menno Simons.

Oversight

The article, "Bible Distribution in Puerto Rico," in the May issue of the Bulletin, page 8, was written by Earl Maust, C.P.S. member of the Mennonite unit near Aibonito, Puerto Rico. His name was omitted by an oversight.

(Continued from preceding page)

the Friesland Mennonite Colony. This project will be under the immediate direction of Betty Keeney, who is now engaged in the preparation and organization of this project. This Paraguayan program will start experimentally and continue to expand as budget and developments warrant.

The Friends Relief Service, according to word from London, will help re-establish the carpet-weaving industry of villages in Salonika, Greece. Wool is expected to be provided by South African and Australian Friends.—**Philadelphia Inquirer**, May 26, 1945.

Reports from the Desert

Fourteen Mennonite workers continue a relief ministration, under U.N.R.R.A., in behalf of the Yugoslav refugees tented on the sands near Cairo, Egypt. At the present time several of the camps are being dismantled and the occupants returned to their homes on the Dalmatian Coast.—Editor.

Work in the Shops

As you have no doubt heard, there are some disagreeable aspects to our work here in the U.N.R.R.A. camps, but in my work I have had little time to think of those because of the furious pace required to keep from being snowed under with work. I cannot help liking my job because of the evident good the shops are in the camps. Not only do they help to make us more comfortable by what they produce, but, as you can imagine, the work they provide helps in no small way to stave off the psychic illnesses so commonly prevalent among refugees who must mark time on a barren desert. I wish we could get enough raw materials to expand to five times as large as we are. Many of the older men, and some young ones as well, are already shot to pieces with morbid laziness. I really don't know of any that are over-ambitious. If I only knew their language I could do so much more to stir them. I am learning it, of course, as fast as I can, but I have very little time for study.—Ervin Hooley.

Clerical Detail

We have been engaged in taking a physical inventory of supplies on hand and in use throughout the entire camp. The figures were taken by actual count in the various subunits and then submitted to our office for summarization and comparison with existing inventories for respective units. I am in charge of the records of nonexpendable materials, that is, the supplies that are not used up in the process of being used, such as tentage, tools, cookhouse and dining hall equipment, etc. We have over six hundred items in this part of our record keeping in our office. The office in the past has been understaffed and they could not keep up with the rate of issue. As a result the figures in the books did not represent a true picture of what was on hand and in use. Then, too, the rate of loss in supplies by all the various ways that they can be used up is tremendous in work of this nature. So from this point of view I am glad that this work was undertaken. It has meant extra hours of work, but will be well worth the extra effort when completed. I expect that we have at least another week ahead of us in this particular job.—Henry Detwiler.

Welfare Work

In my welfare work the past few weeks I have spent much time getting papers and documents in order for about nine or ten families for America and about a half dozen to New Zealand and Australia. It has taken hours and hours of work and numerous trips to Port Tewfik to the American Consul. I have high hopes of getting most of the New Zealand and Australia cases off soon. The American cases are all ready to go except that the money has been delayed because certain shipping companies in the States refused to accept money for passage. Most of the families will be going to San Pedro, California, where the husbands are now working. I am sure they will make good citizens, for they are a fine lot of people.—Delvin Kirchhofer.

To Enter the Balkans

As to entrance into Yugoslavia and other Balkan countries, it is open only to those specific individuals who are authorized to go by Allied Military Headquarters, which authorization is given only in response to request from the country concerned. Thus U.N.R.R.A. has no power to free staff members on individual application for service in such countries. However, U.N.R.R.A. does expect to use camp personnel, including our M.C.C. workers if they so wish, for repatriation of refugees. If the country concerned requests and allows U.N.R.R.A. workers to stay for work with these refugees and other needy persons, these repatriation workers would be the first in line to serve in the homeland of the refugees. Thus the way is open under U.N.R.R.A. for M.C.C. workers to serve in such countries if it is possible to serve there. It seems for the present that the best possibility of getting into the Balkans, at least from here, is under the U.N.R.R.A. umbrella.—S. F. Pannabecker.

In Italy at present an egg costs 25¢ to 35¢; bread is 45¢ a loaf. The average pay of a laborer is 70¢ a day.—Church Committee of Overseas Relief.

Mennonite Aid to Mennonites in the Haut-and Bas-Rhin (Alsace) and the Eastern Parts of France Proper

Henry Buller, who remained in France after the investigation tour with Samuel Goering, reports concerning further survey and study of the relief situation among Mennonites in Alsace.—Editor.

Funds Not Needed

I had occasion to meet two families who had lost everything as a result of the war. The father of the first family told me before I had the opportunity to ask him that what they needed was materials of all kinds. He had all the money he wanted —special allocations of one kind or another gave him all he could use at the present time. The second family was a young couple who had also lost everything. I asked the young man what his reactions would be if I were to offer him money in cash at the present time. He immediately said that he had all that he wanted or could use intelligently at the present time. Again, materials of all kinds were needed. Later on, he said that perhaps in eight months or a year, money may be useful; at that time construction will once again be allowed and possible. But for the time being there is hardly any question of real rebuilding, and for the daily needs there is quite enough money.

Clothing, Tools, and Machines Needed

I then asked him what we could send in the way of materials. "Well," he said, since most of us here are farmers, we could use materials useful on farms." In the first place, he listed cloth for the making of work clothing. He even suggested old clothing that was still usable for working in the fields and the vineyards. In any case, clothing of all kinds for young and old, plus bedding and linen, will be very useful and needed for the next year or two in this region.

In regard to tools and machines he suggested the following: in the first place, small tools for use on the farms, orchards, and vineyards—hoes, rakes, forks, spades, shovels, scythes, sickles, etc. Larger tools might include mowing machines (American makes already popular here), one-row listing plows, etc. If you think such shipments might be possible, it would be well to appoint someone to study more closely just what type of equipment would be most useful and wanted. Also I think a certain number of sewing machines, washing machines, and other household equipment would be useful for some Mennonite homes as well as for our children's homes.

Transportation

Transportation is still our biggest problem here, as it is for all of France at the present moment. The Hillman (English van) is helping us out to some degree, but at the same time it is causing us a loss of time which is regrettable. Garages are undependable.

I want to underline once more the necessity for us either to procure local vehicles as soon as possible, and as good as possible, or have standard vehicles sent from the States in as brief a delay as possible. Roger Georges says that French factories are beginning to produce, but I feel it will be a long time before we will be able to procure some of their own production.

Here I would suggest that new vehicles be procured in the States as soon as possible and shipped over to France. My suggestion would be to procure all of the same kind—such as Ford 65's, sedans. Trailer attachments could then be made and trailers built. Such a unit would be ideal for use with a children's home. Also, I think it worth while that a delegate with mechanical ability be appointed to come to the Continent as soon as possible. In this way a garage might be found where our own delegate could work on our vehicles with a nominal fee for the use of tools and space.—Henry Buller.

Seven million French persons, it is estimated, have been displaced as a result of the war. Two million of these are outside France. Those inside France were bombed out, were evacuated because their homes were in military zones, or were removed to make way for German settlers.—**Gospel Messenger.**

Paving the Way

Peter Dyck has been serving in Mennonite relief projects in England during the past four years. At home at Kitchener, Ontario, he has given some of the best years of his youth to minister to war sufferers in the cities of London, Coventry, Birmingham, and Liverpool. He was director of Taxal Edge, home for convalescent boys, near Manchester. More recently, he and Sister Dyck (Freda Klassen) have been engaged in welfare work among Dutch children. The Dycks hope to enter Holland by June 15 for further relief service. Bro. Dyck says that his life was saved as a child in Russia when he was fed by Mennonite relief workers.—Editor.

"I cannot trust myself to say what I think or feel in plain English," said Samuel Plimsol, the English reformer. "I shall therefore put my feelings into my work. And, oh! how I will work!" That is how many of us feel here at the Dutch children's camp near Hull. Every day and every hour of the day we are reminded of the significance of our work, and although we look after five hundred children, it is constantly driven home to us that our little worries and problems are mere test-tube illustrations of that which awaits us all in the postwar world.

First, when the children arrived from Holland, they had to be fed. As a layman I can only guess at some of the difficulties involved in this. Precautions have to be taken against all manner of things, and it is a relief to know that dietetic experts are on the spot, advising the cooks, working out menus, calculating calories, etc. The fact that Dutch cooks, whose method of cooking is aptly referred to as the "wet, greasy way" by our English caterer, came over with the children, does not simplify matters. True, it solved the labor problem which is very acute in England today, but it does play havoc with the current rationing system. Even so, most difficulties have been overcome by now, the third week of camp life, and the children will soon be on normal diet and full rations.

Secondly, there is the clothing problem. All of them had to be fitted out from top to bottom with a complete change of clothing and footwear. It was a comparatively simple matter here, thanks to the liberal gifts of clothing sent to England in previous years by American and Canadian people and stored in W.V.S. (Women's Voluntary Service) depots. Fortunately for the British people, the tide of war changed and much of the clothing intended for the bombed-out can now be passed on to the needy of other countries. For over a week children queued up outside one of the eighty huts, and one by one they were fitted out by the good ladies of the W.V.S.

Thirdly, there is the medical and health aspect. There seems to be no end to the constant stream going into "Polikliniek" ("Poly"—many or much, indicates that it is a clinic for every ailment and complaint). Once a day our M.C.C. van, a perfect godsend to this camp, makes the round to collect and bring to "Sick Bay" all bed-patients. I am told that the skin condition of many has been terrible—full of sores, boils, septic blisters, rashes, etc.—but that it is now improving. Weighing five hundred children every week is in itself no small task, but from the records compiled in the weighing room, we now have the cheering news that on the whole the weights are going up very satisfactorily. Doctors were with us during the first week, making all manner of tests, photographs, and experiments in order to ascertain from these children what their deficiencies are, which vitamins they lack, how their undernourished bodies can best assimilate these and in what form, and many other such things beyond the realm of a layman's understanding. The knowledge gathered here will enable medical authorities to go onto the continent after the war better armed to meet the needs of the many millions who are still beyond reach of any relief.

Finally, if the work is to be at all complete and of lasting value, each one of us has to be a minister of reconciliation. Just how we set about this task is a matter left to every individual to do, first, according to his or her insight into the problem, and secondly, according to his or her talents and training. "Only one's life can show the path," said Leo Tolstoy, and when we agree to that, as needs we must, then we see our task clearly before us.—Peter J. Dyck.

The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed; it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.—Shakespeare.

To love and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

Peace Notes

C.P.S. DEMOBILIZATION

Now that men in Civilian Public Service know how they will be demobilized they are waiting eagerly to see the first applications processed and the plan in operation. While the percentage of men to be released roughly parallels that of the armed forces, Selective Service has announced, because of the public relations factor, that C.P.S. demobilization will take place one step behind that of soldiers. S.S.S. has indicated that it will take nearly two months before the necessary information can be compiled. This will mean that the first assignees will be discharged probably sometime in August or September.

Adjusted rating cards have been sent by Selective Service to all C.P.S. camps and units to secure the information needed. Assignees will be considered eligible for release who complete such a card and return it to S.S.S. by June 30, 1945. This card is also considered the assignee's application for discharge.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR C.P.S. MEN

While "When will I be demobilized?" is the biggest question C.P.S. men are asking these days, the second biggest probably is, "What will I do after I am demobilized?" To assist C.P.S. men who desire counsel or help in answering this latter question the Mennonite Aid Section at Akron has been receiving requests for the employment of C.P.S. men. The Section hopes to have on file a variety of job opportunities to make available for C.P.S. men. Discharged C.P.S. men without jobs are asked to write to the Aid Section for help in securing employment.

THE END OF C.P.S.

In a recent letter to all the camps and units, Paul Comly French revealed the decision of Selective Service to terminate C.P.S. at the end of six months after the conclusion of the war. This would mean the complete liquidation of the present form of alternative service for 4-E men as provided under the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. In making the announcement, Selective Service assured C.P.S. men that they will not be placed on reserve status for any future obligation to the Government. It was also pointed out that this release of C.P.S. men would take place regardless of the number of men still remaining in the armed forces for occupation services.

C.O.'s IN GERMANY

Entered in the Congressional Record recently was the following statement, contained in the report of the group of Congressmen who were invited to visit and inspect the concentration camps in Germany: "At each of these camps we found four general classifications of prisoners: (1) political prisoners, (2) habitual criminals, (3) conscientious or religious objectors, (4) persons who were imprisoned for failure to work."

IS C.P.S. SIGNIFICANT?

The following testimony is taken from a letter written by a nurse who had served as a staff member in two Mennonite C.P.S. camps and is now engaged in relief service:

"I would like to give a word of warning to those who believe that foreign relief service is a far more positive answer to our C.O. stand than doing 'work of national importance' in base camps and special projects. Having spent a year as a nurse in C.P.S. camps, I would not say No when asked to go to ——— because I did feel that it would be a positive work or service. People here are not in rags and quivering for soup. Some relief workers have had a severe struggle with themselves in seeing the importance of this work. I think all of us have been discouraged at times and have had to make a readjustment and try to see the long-range view. C.P.S. has very worthy projects and as I think back over my year in C.P.S. and eight months in relief, I feel that I have had just as many opportunities previously as now. Relief service has given me a larger vision, greater appreciation, and many new experiences, though."

Thou, O Christ, convince us by Thy Spirit; thrill us with Thy divine passion; drown our selfishness in Thy invading love; lay on us the burden of the world's suffering.

TWO NEW PUBLICATIONS . . .

THE HISTORY AND PRINCIPLES OF MENNONITE RELIEF WORK

By M. C. Lehman

Relief Work Before the First World War
Relief Work Between the Two World Wars
The Story of the Mennonite Central Committee
Relief Work During the Present World War
The Significance of the Relief Work of the Church
Why We Should Pursue a Program of Relief

Appearing at a time when the ministration of the Christian relief worker is sorely needed . . . of interest to anyone seeking to familiarize himself with the story of Mennonite relief work and principles of operation.

Price:

Single copies, 20¢; in quantities of ten or more, 15¢. Students' edition, with a syllabus and bibliography added, 30¢ per copy; in quantities of ten or more, 25¢.

MENNONITE COLONIZATION IN MEXICO

By J. Winfield Fretz

Who Are the Mennonites of Mexico?
Why Did the Mennonites Go to Mexico?
Where Did the Mennonites Settle in Mexico?
What Is the Mennonite Pattern of Settlement?
How Do the Mennonites Earn Their Living?
How Are the Mennonites Governed?
What Is the Nature of the Old Colony Church?
What Are Some Distinctive Conditions and Social Customs?
What Do Mexicans and Mennonites Think of Each Other?
What Is the Future of Mennonites in Mexico?

Introducing the 12,000 Mennonites residing in Mexico . . . of interest to students of Mennonite history . . . a fascinating account of the author's personal visit to the Mennonite colonies in Mexico.

Price: Single copies, 20¢; in quantities of ten or more, 15¢.

. . . ORDER FROM M.C.C., AKRON, PA.